

STATEMENT BY

HONORABLE THOMAS R. LAMONT

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY, MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS

UNITED STATES ARMY

BEFORE

PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SECOND SESSION, 111<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS

MARCH 10, 2010

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

UNTIL RELEASED BY THE

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

## **Introduction**

Chairman Webb, Senator Graham, Distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of America's Army. Our greatest heroes are America's most precious resource – our Soldiers. These Soldiers and their Families, backed by our Civilian workforce, represent the very best of America's values and ideals and faithfully shoulder the load that our nation asks of them. This fighting force of 1.1 million Soldiers is continually tested at home and abroad. Repeatedly our nation's men and women step forward and pledge to serve. They recognize the challenges facing our nation, answer the call, and become part of something larger than themselves. Their dedicated service and sacrifice are deserving of the very best services, programs, equipment, training, benefits, lifestyle, and leadership available. Our focus this year centers on restoring the balance, resilience, and sustainment of the force, growth in talent, our ability to meet the national challenges, and the importance of maintaining this strength to meet the demands now and for the future. Thank you for your steadfast commitment to ensuring our Soldiers, their Families, and our Civilian workforce by supporting our personnel initiatives to ensure growth, sustainment and well being of our All-Volunteer Force.

## **Strategic Overview**

America's Army, strained by over eight years of persistent conflict, remains a resilient force. Our Army, however, is also stretched and out of balance while demand has continued to grow. The Army has added nearly 100,000 more Soldiers since 2004. More than one million of our country's finest men and women have deployed to combat, with over 5,000 lives sacrificed in the line of duty. The Army appreciates your recent support in providing the Army with temporary end strength increase of 22,000 to provide some relief to our stressed force. We will complete the initial ramp of 15,000 by the end of Fiscal Year 2010 and will evaluate the need to complete the remaining amount later this year. Even with this temporary increase, we face many challenges ahead, but must remain vigilant and supportive to the needs of our people. We must continue to address these needs and find a way to get our Army back to a balanced force.

## **End Strength**

To alleviate the stress and strain on the force, the Department of Defense authorized the Army a Temporary End Strength Increase (TESI) of up to 22,000 Active Duty Soldiers. Currently the plan is to use 15,000 of the 22,000 with a decision on the remaining 7,000 expected at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, FY10. This temporary increase provides additional, primarily skill level one, Soldiers within highly deployed Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs) to combatant commanders. TESI has already increased unit readiness and will provide increased manning and readiness until FY13 when the Army returns to its base end strength level of 547,400 in the active component. While the majority of these additional Soldiers are enlisted, the officer ranks will also experience a slight increase.

Another advantage of TESI is a reduction in the use of Stop Loss. The Army expects to achieve a 50% reduction in the number of Soldiers affected by Stop Loss by June 2010. As of January 2010, 7,861 Soldiers were affected by Stop Loss, a 41% reduction from the January 2009 baseline of 13,217. By January 2011, the Army will have no Soldiers deployed under Stop Loss. However, Soldiers in post-deployment reintegration or demobilization may still be in Stop Loss until early Spring 2011. TESI and the implementation of voluntary stabilization programs for each component have made significant contributions to the Army's ability to eliminate Stop Loss, while minimizing the potentially detrimental impact to unit readiness.

We continue to make significant progress in our efforts to restore balance. Increasing time between deployments for our Soldiers and building greater predictability for Soldiers and Families continues to be one of our key concerns. Despite the short term impact of the recent surge of troops to Afghanistan, we expect the ratio of Boots on Ground (BOG) time to Dwell time at 1:2 for the active force and 1:4 for the reserve component to improve as demand decreases. Eventually, increased dwell time will be achieved by lowering the demand on our forces while increasing the size of the active Army. This will ease the constant pressures on our forces as we move into the rotational cycle of the Army Forces Generation (ARFORGEN) model. The Army Senior

Leadership remains committed to meet these deployment goals while eliminating Stop Loss, and without any increase in tour length for our Soldiers.

### **Recruiting and Retention (Officer and Enlisted)**

Our Soldiers are the Army's most important resources, and our ability to meet the challenges of the current and future operational environments depends on our ability to sustain the All-Volunteer Force. The pace and demand of the operational environment over the last several years has caused us to dedicate our focus to reaching a high volume of recruits. The shift in the economy, however, has allowed us to demand even higher quality recruits. Despite the challenges of an Army engaged in two protracted conflicts, the Army exceeded its enlisted recruiting and retention missions for FY09 and is confident it will meet its goals for FY10. The Army met 104% of its recruiting goals for FY09, while at the same time, meeting its quality benchmarks for new recruits. Successfully meeting these critical benchmarks moves us closer to restoring balance. As we dedicate ourselves to the FY10 recruiting mission, we will continue to monitor trends and make adjustments as required.

In FY09, with Congressional support, the total Army spent \$4.9B on recruiting and retention. In FY10, these programs received \$4.4B due to a more favorable recruiting and retention environment. Our \$4.6B, FY11 request is based on the need to continue funding for contracts written between FY06 and FY09 and to ensure the success of the total Army's recruiting and retention missions. The amount budgeted for contractual payments is anticipated to decrease in FY12 and subsequent years.

Because of this funding, the Army is now a higher quality All-Volunteer Force. For example, the Army's percentage of "high quality" enlisted Soldiers with a high school diploma have increased by 2.1% since the end of FY09. Additionally, recruits scoring in the upper range (50-99%) on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) increased 2.0%; and recruits who scored poorly (30% and below) on the AFQT decreased 0.4%. The Army was able to decrease the amount of ineligibility waivers previously provided for enlistments and appointments. Also, the Army was able to

repair mid-grade officer shortages in the Regular Army, which provided the opportunity to aggressively target mid-grade shortages in the Reserve Components.

Overall, the Army's programs are effective in recruiting and retaining both Officers and Enlisted Soldiers with critical skills. For Enlisted Soldiers, the Enlistment Bonus (EB), the Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB), Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB), Army College Fund (ACF) and the Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP) remain as proven and effective tools for filling critical skills. The ACF and SLRP are especially effective in attracting quality recruits who have some college experience or plan to attend college after the Army.

To assist in recruiting critical skills, the Army launched the "Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest" (MAVNI) Pilot Program which the Secretary of Defense authorized on November 25, 2008 and Army launched on February 23, 2009. The purpose was to attract high quality individuals with exceptional skills in health care professions or native speaking skills in at least one of 35 critical foreign languages. MAVNI recruits are non-U.S. citizens who have been legally present in the United States for two or more years and speak a critically needed foreign language or are US licensed health care professionals who meet or exceed all requirements for military service but for US citizenship. They do not have permanent residency (i.e. Green Cards). We recruited 788 MAVNI with language skills and 143 health care professionals during the 12 months since the program launched. Without spending a single dollar on marketing or advertising, Army received over 12,000 leads for the MAVNI program and positive media coverage. Of the foreign language speakers recruited, 66% have a bachelor's degree or higher, and 30% have at least a master's degree. Half the MAVNI recruits speak and comprehend the foreign language for which they were recruited at the 3/3 level or higher which is akin to a college graduate. Their loss from the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) is one-third that of non-MAVNI recruits and their attrition rate once in the Service is virtually nil. We reached the cap for this program established by the Secretary of Defense so until the program is extended we are unable to recruit the many applicants waiting to be processed.

Through a separate program, the Army has recruited more than 1,600 Soldiers as military interpreters and translators under the MOS O9L Program. This MOS enlists native speakers of Arabic, Pashtu, Dari, Farsi, and Kurdish into all components of the Army to serve as interpreters in uniform. Combatant Commanders have found them to be force multipliers as they bring high levels of proficiency in these languages as well as first hand cultural knowledge.

In FY09, all components exceeded the annual retention goal. The Active Army achieved 124% of the annual goal, the Army Reserve achieved 105%, of the annual goal, and the Army National Guard achieved 106% of the annual goal. During FY09, retention bonuses were carefully monitored and adjusted to achieve the maximum result, ensuring the Army met its retention goals while remaining fiscally responsible. The economic environment allowed the Army to reduce incentive levels as well as the number of occupations offering bonuses, while focusing on our most critical skills. In addition, use of the Army's Critical Skills Retention Bonus greatly assisted in retaining very experienced senior enlisted Soldiers with invaluable leadership and combat experience. Retention of combat experienced veterans remains critical to current and future readiness. In fact, 39% of all reenlistments occurred while Soldiers were deployed. The Active Army also continued to support and encourage Active Duty Soldiers who elected not to reenlist to transfer to the Reserve Component upon completion of their Active Duty tour.

The Army retention mission is also on track to meet the goals set for FY10. The Active Army has reenlisted 41,262 Soldiers for 68% of the annual goal, the Army Reserve has reenlisted 4,291 for 42% of the annual goal, and the Army National Guard has reenlisted 10,771 Soldiers for 35% of the annual goal. In all components, the Army expects to finish successfully in every category.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill, which took effect August 1, 2009, provides a significantly enhanced level of educational benefits for Active Duty Service Members. Additionally, it serves as a valuable incentive to attract and retain quality Soldiers of all ranks. The Army expects the Post 9/11 GI Bill to serve as an inducement for college oriented teens

to join the Army, while transferability should increase retention within our mid-career (6-10 years of service), category of Soldiers. Although it is too early to fully determine the impact of the Post 9/11 GI Bill on both recruiting and retention, initial signs are positive. In particular, we've kept a watchful eye on the retention of our initial term Soldiers who some feared might separate under expiration of their term of service in order to use their educational benefits. However, the Army exceeded its retention goals for first term Soldiers in FY09 and continues to do so in FY10.

Shortages remain within our officer corps due to overall structural growth of the Army. To correct this, the Army initiated the Captains' Retention Incentive Menu in September 2007. The Army spent \$443.6M from FY07 to present on this incentive program. The goal of the program was to recruit, retain, and manage critical skills to increase the retention of lieutenants and captains for three years. The Captains' Retention Incentives Menu program included a cash option based on the officer's branch, resident graduate school attendance for up to 18 months, or attendance at the Defense Language Institute for one year. As a result, the Army's retention rate for Captains increased in FY08 to 89.1% and again in FY09 to 89.9% over the ten-year average of 88%. The program guaranteed retention through FY11 for over 16,000 of the 23,000 captains who were eligible to participate. The timing of our Captains' Retention Incentives Menu program, concurrent with the dramatic downturn of the economy and job market, helped support our retention goals. The cash and Defense Language Institute options ended in November 2008. The remaining retention incentive, the Expanded Graduate School Program, has been funded at \$7.5M in FY10. Overall, the single most effective retention incentive for junior officers was the cash bonus. Over 94% of the more than 16,000 officers who took incentives in FY08 elected to take the cash bonus. Department of Defense survey data analysis showed that most officers who intended to separate or were undecided, took the incentive and committed to further obligated Army service.

The United States Military Academy (USMA) and ROTC both continue to offer pre-commissioning incentives. These consist of offering new officers their Post or Branch of Choice or Graduate Schooling. In FY06 through FY09 there were

approximately 6000 participants. These incentives have increased longevity by 40% for newly-commissioned, high-performing USMA and ROTC officers.

In spite of a dramatically changed recruiting climate, based on the economy, our message to our Soldiers and their Families must resound with assurance that they will be cared for in a manner commensurate with their service and sacrifice. Incentives, bonuses and pay are only part of the equation in creating balance in our Soldiers and Families lives. In the event of a life changing injury or the loss of life, our Soldiers are assured that their Families will receive financial and programmatic support for their loss and sacrifice. This support includes full-earned benefits and disability compensation. The Army is working closely and aggressively with Soldiers and their Families to streamline access to assistance from other Federal Agencies, such as the Social Security Administration, Department of Labor, and Department of Veterans Affairs.

In direct support of President Obama's Veteran's Day Executive Order on employment of veterans in the Federal government, we have begun a Veterans Employment Transition Initiative to streamline, synchronize, and integrate existing policies, programs, and initiatives to assist Soldiers and their families as they transition out of the military. The intent is to ensure that they have timely visibility of every opportunity available to them as they transition to civilian life, whether as Federal workers or as contributing members of the private sector.

The Army carefully manages its resources, reviewing and adjusting incentives at least quarterly to ensure we attract and retain quality individuals in needed occupations, while remaining fiscally responsible to avoid excessive payments. The economic environment has allowed us to reduce incentive amounts and the number of occupations offered bonuses or education incentives. Enlistment Bonuses are at the lowest levels since the 1990s drawdown. However, we must retain the flexibility to apply incentives as necessary to retain Soldiers with critical or specialized skills. The continued authorities and funding of these programs by Congress remain critical to the sustainment of the Army.



## **Individual Ready Reserve Mobilization**

The Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) is a category of the Ready Reserve, and is composed of those members of the Ready Reserve who are not serving in Selected Reserve units or assignments, or in the Inactive National Guard. The availability of IRR Soldiers is critical to the Army's mission of providing properly trained and equipped units of sufficient strength to meet contingency operation or mobilization requirements. As of February 28, 2010, there are 59,413 Soldiers in the IRR. Since September 11, 2001, a total of 29,997 Soldiers received mobilization orders and a total of 12,018 Soldiers deployed to the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility. The Army applies specific screening criteria and a tiered systemic approach regarding involuntary mobilization of the IRR. These actions align with the January 2007 DOD policy on Utilization of the Total Force and take into account a Soldier's dwell time, Military Service Obligation (MSO), and previous deployments in support of OCONUS Contingency Operations (OCO).

An effective IRR program is based on several factors, including the Soldiers' understanding of their obligations, access to benefits and support, and time to adjust personal affairs prior to mobilizations. In an ongoing effort to validate the readiness of the IRR, the Army continues to implement the IRR Muster program. Approximately five months after entering the IRR program, Soldiers will be ordered to muster duty. Afterward, Soldiers are required to muster each year they remain in the IRR. Through the muster program, the Army established a partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs to use VA medical centers as muster sites for the added opportunity of connecting Soldiers to VA services. During FY09, the Army spent approximately \$3.6M to muster 13,500 Soldiers, contributing to 3,300 Soldiers returning to Army Reserve formations. The Army plans to muster 14,000 IRR Soldiers at an estimated cost of \$4.2M in FY10 and expect to impact 3,500 Soldiers returning to Army Reserve Formations.

## **Operational Reserve**

As the Army continues to institutionalize the Operational Reserve, our first and greatest challenge is to effectively and efficiently deliver ready and trained Soldiers. Transforming the Reserve Components (RC) into an operational force in the near-term (FY12-14) will provide a means for RC forces to provide proportional support to the Army's Force Supply model of a Corps Headquarters, five Division Headquarters (4 Active Component (AC), 1 RC), 20 Brigade Combat Teams (15 AC, 5 RC), and 90K enablers (41K AC, 49K RC) to support combatant command requirements through 2014 time period. It is important to note that programming decisions are required in the near term to ensure RC forces are sufficiently ready to support the Army's force generation plans. Without sufficient resources in unit management, collective training and medical/dental readiness, the RC will not be ready to support the planned 1/5/20/90 force supply construct.

The Army will require recurrent, assured and predictable access to the RC to meet operational requirements as requirements increase for Army forces to conduct overseas engagement activities over the remaining years of the program period (FY15-17). During this period, RC forces will be mobilized and employed in full spectrum operations at rates proportional to AC forces within force utilization goals of 1:3 (AC) and 1:5 (RC). Continued investments in RC unit management, collective training and medical/dental readiness are required to achieve required readiness levels in accordance with these ARFORGEN goals. Moreover, these investments are required within the base funding to ensure the RC achieves a level of institutional transformation that cannot be achieved through the year-by-year allocation of resources from overseas contingency operations funds.

Finally, transforming the RC into an operational force provides an opportunity for the Army to provide the most cost-effective Total Force and mitigate any decline in resources by investing now in the most cost-efficient portion of the Army's Total Force. The Army National Guard (ARNG) and the United States Army Reserve (USAR) account for 51% of the Army's military end strength for 16% of the base budget. When

comparing the cost per Soldier, the relative value of the RC is even greater. A 2008 comparison of AC/RC manpower by HQDA G-8 identified the approximate total costs per Regular Army Soldier in manpower, training, equipping, organization costs and operating costs as \$135K, compared to \$36K for ARNG Soldiers and \$35K for Army Reserve Soldiers. Given the relative value is a reasoned investment for the Army's Total Force, this will make targeted investments improve RC readiness. Moreover, such investments in the near term (POM 2012-2017) will position the Army to better manage the risks of declining resources for the Army, should such a reduction be required in the next two to five years. However, delays in these investment decisions reduce the Army's flexibility to consider strategic alternatives to a larger active force structure model in the long-term.

### **Quality of Life**

Recognizing that the strength of our Army comes from the strength of our Army Families, the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army initiated the Army Family Covenant in October 2007 and reaffirmed this commitment by resigning the Covenant this past October. The Covenant institutionalizes the Army's commitment to provide Soldiers and Families a quality of life commensurate with the quality of service they provide our Nation. The Army Family Covenant incorporates programs designed to build strength and resilience in our Families. These improved services and programs help to mitigate the stress from multiple deployments and frequent military moves.

The Covenant focuses on the following: standardizing Soldier and Family programs; increasing access and quality of health care; improving Soldier and Family housing; ensuring excellence in our schools, youth and child care services; expanding the education and employment opportunities for Family members; improving Soldier quality of life in recreation, travel, and the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) program; and improving relationships with local communities and marketplaces.

From FY07 to FY10, the Army more than doubled its investment in Family programs. To ensure they remain enduring, these increases have been included in the

FY10 base budget. Furthermore, this funding will increase from \$1.7B in FY10 to \$1.9B in FY15.

We must never forget that we are one Army made up of Active Duty, National Guard, and Army Reserve components and must often reach “beyond the gates of the garrison” to ensure we support our geographically dispersed Families. We are thankful for all the citizens and community based organizations that have stepped up to support our Soldiers and their Families, regardless of their location.

### **Civilian Personnel and Workforce Development**

Department of the Army Civilian employees provide vital support to Soldiers and Families in this era of persistent conflict. They share responsibility for mission accomplishment by delivering combat support and combat service support – at home and abroad. More than ever, Army Civilians are an absolutely essential component of readiness and a key element in restoring balance. Today, the Army Civilian Corps has nearly 300,000 employees with 3,832 currently serving in harm’s way in the U.S. Central Command area of operations.

Since September 11, 2001, we increased the civilian workforce from 222,000 to 263,169 (plus 24,357 Civil Works) due to overseas contingency operations, Defense Health Program increases, Family and Soldier Support initiatives, acquisition workforce growth, in-sourcing contracts associated with inherently governmental functions, military technician increases, and Military-to-Civilian conversions. Future Civilian employee growth is critical to supporting current plans to rebalance the Army to 73 brigade combat teams and associated combat support/combat service support units by FY11.

In FY09, the Army saved significant resources by in-sourcing more than 900 core governmental functions to Army Civilians. We plan to in-source 7,162 positions in FY10, and are programmed to in-source 11,084 positions during FY11-FY15, of which 3,988 are acquisition positions. These positions were identified in the Army’s on-going contractor inventory review process.

Current workforce development programs, such as the Army Intern Program; the Army Fellows Program; the Presidential Management Fellows Program; the Senior Fellows Program, and the Army Senior Leader Development Program, to name a few, are helping the Army to “build a bench”, of future Army leaders. In an era of persistent conflict, however, the operational and budgetary realities of fighting terrorism on multiple fronts have simultaneously increased the requirements for development and decreased the available funding. Simply put, the Army’s resources to develop our Civilians have not kept pace with the need. While current training and development programs provide highly competitive growth opportunities, better incentives for self-development and professional development are needed to ensure the Civilian cohort is as prepared to meet future missions as their military counterparts. The Department of the Army also has several initiatives to focus and invigorate development of the Civilian Workforce, which complement the strategic workforce plan requirements outlined in the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act.

The Army is developing a Civilian Human Capital Strategy to better focus on the full life-cycle needs of Civilian Workforce, from recruitment to replacement. Because of the increasing complexity of today’s operational environment, the Army must invest more resources into recruiting, sustaining, and developing its Civilian workforce. The Initial emphasis of our Civilian Human Capital Strategy will be on identification of the competencies needed by employees in mission critical occupations, assessment of the current competency levels of the workforce, and strategies for closing the gaps. This focus will enable the Army to develop competency-based Civilian recruiting and hiring strategies as well. This approach will help ease the transition from one generation to the next as we implement Base Realignment and Closure and begin to experience the next wave of baby boomer retirements.

#### **Army Equal Opportunity Policy**

The Army leads the nation in Equal Opportunity (EO) policy and practice. Commanders at all levels are responsible for sustaining positive EO climates within their organizations to enhance Army Readiness. Remaining applicable and relevant within

the ever-changing environment in which we operate, the Army is transforming EO policy/ program by integrating and institutionalizing equal opportunity and diversity goals, objectives and training practices. This effort will strengthen the foundation of the Army's Human Capital Strategy. Since FY08, the Army has invested \$3.4M and expects to invest another \$0.9M in FY10 for EO personnel and services support, database and survey systems, outreach support, and training contracts.

### **Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention**

The Army's goal is to eliminate sexual assault and harassment by creating a climate that respects the dignity of every member of the esteemed band of brothers and sisters. The Secretary of the Army (SECARMY) and the Chief of Staff (CSA) remain personally involved in reinforcing to all Soldiers and leaders the importance of preventing sexual assault and harassment. Under their guidance and leadership, the Army launched a comprehensive sexual assault prevention strategy that requires leaders to establish a positive command climate where sexual assault is clearly not acceptable. The strategy further encourages Soldiers to execute peer-to-peer intervention personally, and to not tolerate behavior that could lead to sexual assault.

The cornerstone of the Army's prevention strategy is the "I. A.M. Strong" campaign, where the letters *I, A, and M* stand for Intervene – Act – Motivate. The "I. A.M. Strong" campaign features Soldiers as influential role models and provides peer-to-peer messages outlining the Army's intent for all its members to personally take action in the effort to protect our communities. Leaders have embraced "I. A.M. Strong" initiatives and are motivating Soldiers to engage proactively and prevent sexual assault.

The Army's sexual assault prevention strategy consists of four integrated phases and extends through calendar year (CY) 2014 as we work to be the nation's leader in sexual harassment and sexual assault prevention.

The SECARMY introduced the "I. A.M. Strong" campaign at the Sexual Assault Prevention Summit in September 2008. The Summit served as a platform to launch Phase I (Committed Army Leadership) by providing training on best practices and

allowing command's the opportunity to develop prevention plans to support the Army strategy.

Phase II of the prevention strategy (Army-wide Conviction) includes educating Soldiers to understand their moral responsibility to intervene and stop sexual assault and harassment. Phase II began at the 2009 Sexual Assault Prevention Summit (6-10 Apr 09) during which the SECARMY, CSA, and Sergeant Major of the Army addressed attendees, which included over 100 Sergeants Major and 50 General Officers.

Phase III culminates the dedicated effort of leaders and Soldiers under Phase I and Phase II by "Achieving Cultural Change" that truly reflects Army Values and fosters an environment free from sexual harassment and sexual assault.

The final phase is "Sustainment, Refinement and Sharing," during which the prevention program continues to grow while motivating national partners to support our efforts to change generally accepted negative social behaviors; thus eliminating the crime of sexual assault.

With the implementation of the strategy, a likely near-term consequence will be an increase in the number of reported cases as Soldiers' and other victims' propensity to report increases. This increase in cases will require more sexual assault responder support, specifically: victim advocates, healthcare personnel, investigators, and prosecutors.

### **Suicide Prevention Program**

The loss of any Soldier is a tragedy, particularly when it could have been prevented. There were 160 suicides by active-duty Soldiers during 2009, continuing the five-year trend of increased suicides within the Army. As a result, we have instituted a multi-level, holistic approach to health promotion, risk reduction and suicide prevention. Although the total number and rate of suicides in the Army remains of deep concern, we should remember each of these suicides represents an individual and a family that has

suffered an irreparable loss---and, as a result, our suicide prevention efforts are focused on directly assisting Soldiers, their families and our Army Civilians.

On 16 April 2009, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army (VCSA) signed the *Army Campaign Plan for Health Promotion, Risk Reduction, and Suicide Prevention*, a comprehensive plan setting in motion unprecedented changes in Army doctrine, policy, and resource allocation, as well as immediate guidance to commanders, in order to address the problem of suicides in the overall context of risk reduction and health promotion.

The Army Suicide Prevention Task Force has addressed more than 240 different tasks related to suicide prevention doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel and facilities. Over 90% of these tasks have been implemented.

To build on the Army Campaign Plan's accomplishments during CY2009, the Army Suicide Prevention Task Force is leading an effort to review and assess the effectiveness of Army Health Promotion, Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention programs at all levels. Army has partnered with National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to conduct a long-term study (Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience on Servicemembers) of risk and protective factors to inform health promotion and suicide prevention efforts. The VCSA Task Force is also reviewing all Army programs at all levels that are related to health promotion, risk reduction, suicide prevention, or were implemented to address Soldier, Family, or DA Civilian stressors to ensure that the programs provide appropriate levels of support and address current problems, risk factors, and are relevant to today's Soldiers' Families' and DA Civilians needs.

### **Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program**

The Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (CSF) program is a structured, long-term assessment and development program designed to build the resilience and enhance the performance of the Army's Soldiers, Families, and Civilian Personnel. The CSF program uses individual assessments, tailored virtual training, classroom training and embedded resilience experts to provide Soldiers with the critical skills needed to



take care of themselves, their Families and their teammates in this era of persistent conflict. By developing the five dimensions of strength – physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and family – CSF equips Soldiers with the skills to become more self-aware, fit, balanced, confident, and competent, and ultimately better prepared to face the physical and psychological challenges of sustained operations.

### **Army Substance Abuse Program**

The Nation's persistent conflict has created symptoms of stress for our Soldiers, including an increase in alcohol and drug abuse. This commander's program uses prevention, education, deterrence, detection, and rehabilitation, to reduce and eliminate alcohol and drug abuse. It is based on the expectations of readiness and personal responsibility.

A team recently returned from deployment to US Army Forces, US Central Command. To support our Commanders, clear and effective procedures for random drug testing in theater are under development, such as the implementation of online tools to train unit prevention leaders and to quickly inform commanders of test results. Another area under development is the review of portable prevention education packages for deployed Soldiers, Soldiers at home, and Soldiers in the RC. Additionally, the Army is conducting a pilot program that provides confidential education and treatment to Soldiers who self-refer to the Army substance abuse program for assistance with alcohol issues. In addition to the pilot program, we are conducting a broader, more detailed study to determine the exact nature and extent of any stigma in the Army associated with substance abuse treatment. This study will run concurrently with the pilot program. The pilot program and detailed study were concluded on March 1, 2010 and we expect to report to Congress in April 2010. We want to ensure that all Soldiers who may need assistance can get assistance without the barrier of stigma.

### **Congressional Assistance**

Recruiting, retention and providing for the well-being of the best Army in the world requires a significant commitment by the American people. The Army is grateful

for the continued support of Congress for competitive military benefits and compensation, along with incentives and bonuses for Soldiers and their Families and for the civilian workforce. These are critical in helping the Army be the employer of choice.

### **Conclusion**

We must maintain an appropriate level of investment to ensure a robust and high-quality Force. The well-being and balance of our Force are absolutely dependent upon your tremendous support. The Army is growing and transforming in a period of persistent conflict. We will do so with men and women of the highest caliber whose willingness to serve, is a credit to this great nation.